

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) ~~Selected A selected~~ lactic bacterial strain belonging to the genus Lactobacillus or Pediococcus, ~~which said strain has having~~ the capability of effecting the conversion of malic acid into lactic acid, ~~said bacterium being characterised in that,~~

~~when it is introduced at wherein,~~

~~when said strain introduced at~~ a concentration of between 10^6 and 5.10^7 UFC/ml, directly in [[the]] ~~a~~ dried, freeze-dried or frozen state, into a wine which has an alcohol degree of 10 % or more and a pH greater than or equal to 3.5
[[,]]:

i) [[it]] ~~said strain converts at least 5%, and preferably at least 10 %, of the of~~ malic acid into lactic acid in said wine in 5 days after inoculation of said wine, and

ii) [[it]] ~~said strain converts at least 10 %, and preferably at least 25 %, of the of~~ malic acid in said wine into lactic acid in 10 days after inoculation of said wine.

2. (currently amended) ~~Laetie~~ The lactic bacterial strain according to claim 1, ~~characterised in that, when it is wherein when said strain is~~ introduced at a concentration of between 10^6 and 5.10^7 UFC/ml, directly in [[the]] a dried, freeze-dried or frozen state, into a wine which has an alcohol degree of 10 % or more and a pH greater than or equal to 3.6[[,]]:

iii) [[it]] said strain converts at least 10 %, ~~and preferably at least 15 %, of the of~~ malic acid in said wine into lactic acid in 5 days after inoculation of said wine, and

iv) [[it]] said strain converts at least 25 %, ~~and preferably at least 40 %, of the of~~ malic acid in said wine into lactic acid in 10 days after inoculation of said wine.

3. (currently amended) ~~Laetie~~ The lactic bacterial strain according to claim 1, ~~characterised in that it wherein said strain is homofermentary.~~

4. (currently amended) ~~Malelaetie~~ The lactic bacterial strain according to claim 1, ~~possessing in addition one or more of the following characteristics wherein said~~

strain possesses at least one characteristic selected from the group consisting of:

- [[it]] said strain does not produce biogenic amine from [[the]] aminated precursors,
- [[it]] said strain does not degrade [[the]] glycerol, and
- [[it]] said strain does not degrade [[the]] tartaric acid.

5. (currently amended) ~~Laetie~~ The lactic bacterial strain according to claim [[4]]1, ~~characterised in that it wherein said strain~~ has the capability, when [[it]] said strain is introduced directly at a concentration of 2.10^6 UFC/ml into a wine at a temperature greater than or equal to 18° C, having an SO₂ content of between 0 and 15 mg/l, an alcohol content greater than or equal to 10 % and a pH of 3.7 or more,

- i) of converting 15 % of [[the]] malic acid in said wine into lactic acid in 5 days after inoculation of said wine, and
- ii) of converting 40 % of [[the]] malic acid in said wine into lactic acid in 10 days after inoculation of said wine.

6. (currently amended) ~~Laetie~~ The lactic bacterial

strain according to claim [[4]]1, characterised in that it wherein said strain has the capability, when [[it]] said strain is introduced directly at a concentration of 2.10^6 UFC/ml into a wine at a temperature greater than or equal to 18° C, having an SO₂ content of between 0 and 15 mg/l, an alcohol content greater than or equal to 10 % and a pH of 3.7 or more,

- i) of converting 50 % of [[the]] malic acid in said wine into lactic acid in 5 days after inoculation of said wine, and
- ii) of converting 80 % of [[the]] malic acid in said wine into lactic acid in 10 days after inoculation of said wine.

7. (currently amended) Malelaetie The lactic bacterial strain according to claim 1, selected from the group ~~formed from~~ consisting of *Lactobacillus plantarum*, *Lactobacillus casei*, *Lactobacillus delbrückii*, *Pediococcus acidilactici*, *Pediococcus damnceus*, *Pediococcus pentosaceus*, *Pediococcus parvulus*, and *Pediococcus cerevisiae*.

8. (currently amended) Malelaetie The lactic bacterial strain according to claim 7, selected from the group ~~composed~~ consisting of *Lactobacillus plantarum* DSM-9916, CNCM I-2924 and *Pediococcus acidilactici* CNCM MA 18/5M.

9-17. (canceled)

18. (new) The lactic bacterial strain according to claim 1, wherein said strain converts at least 10% of said malic acid to lactic acid in said 5 days.

19. (new) The lactic bacterial strain according to claim 1, wherein said strain converts at least 25% of said malic acid to lactic acid in said 10 days.

20. (new) The lactic bacterial strain according to claim 2, wherein said strain converts at least 15% of said malic acid to lactic acid in said 5 days.

21. (new) The lactic bacterial strain according to claim 2, wherein said strain converts at least 40% of said malic acid to lactic acid in said 10 days.